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Local and spring floras

The increased demand for convenient and relatively inexpensive handbooks dealing with the flora of limited areas, particularly in the western states, has led to the publication of several local floras which deserve notice. Among these are: (1) PETERSEN'S[3] *Flora of Nebraska*, in which the author seeks to present a list of "all conifers and flowering plants, both native and introduced, which grow without cultivation in Nebraska." The enumeration of species is preceded by keys leading to their determination, and their distribution in the state is indicated. Formal descriptions, however, are omitted. (2) GARRETT'S[4] *Spring flora of the Wasatch region*, in which the author's aim is "to furnish a flora containing practically all the plants of a limited area that bloom during the spring months" or by the middle of June. The main object of this book is to stimulate the student to a study of the vernal flora of the "eastern edge of the Great Basin." The treatment of genera and species is conservative and reliable, and synonyms are introduced when clearness may be gained thereby. (3) NELSON'S[5] *Spring flora of the intermountain states*. In this book no pretense is made to include all the flowering plants of the spring season, but rather "some of the plants that bloom early in the year." It is intended to serve merely as an introduction to the flora of the region outlined, namely Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and adjacent parts of Idaho, Oregon, and Utah; and in connection with it the author recommends the use of more complete manuals for reference.

These little volumes are of portable size, convenient for field work, and no doubt will be helpful to the student in gaining an introductory knowledge of the flora of the regions to which they appertain.—J. M. GREENMAN.

Forests of Nova Scotia

In anticipation of adopting a definite policy of conservation of its forest resources, a survey of the existing conditions has been made by Nova Scotia.[6] The importance of such an undertaking is seen to be very great when it is realized that 80 per cent, or 14,000 square miles, of the province consists of non-agricultural land covered with forests, or fit only for that purpose, and that this resource, furnishing some five millions of dollars in value of annual product, is in danger of exhaustion within the next two decades. Of the forest area less than 2 per cent is virgin, about 10 per cent is barren, while vast areas have been burned and are in various stages of reproduction. The pure deciduous forest includes less than 10 per cent of the whole, and the pure coniferous growth about 20 per cent, while the remainder is mixed, varying from a beech-maple-hemlock association, with a small percentage of spruce in the Annapolis Valley, to one in which birch, spruce, and balsam fir predominate in the more rugged portions of the province.

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[3] PETERSEN, N. F., Flora of Nebraska. A list of the conifers and flowering plants of the state with keys for their determination. 8vo. pp. 217. Published by the author, Lincoln, Neb.: Printed by the State Printing Co. 1912.

[4] GARRETT, A. O., Spring flora of the Wasatch region. 2d ed. 8vo. pp. xii+139. Lancaster, Pa.: New Era Printing Co. 1912.

[5] NELSON, AVEN, Spring flora of the intermountain states. 8vo. pp. xv+204. Boston: Ginn & Co. 1912.

[6] FERNOW, B. E., HOWE, C. D., and WHITE, J. H., Forest conditions of Nova Scotia. Imp. 8vo. pp. v+93. *pls. 12. maps 5.* Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, Canada. 1912.

The ecological part of the survey was carried on principally by HOWE and his assistants. The geology and topography are carefully considered and related to the conditions of reproduction and distribution of the various tree species. Special attention is given to the causes and possibilities of the barrens and semi-barrens. Most of the latter are found to have been caused by repeated fires in regions with coarser soils. If the fires are excluded and provision made for seeding, HOWE concludes that within a century a marketable forest would be developed. All the conditions point not only to the need of conservation, but also to the comparative ease with which it could be instituted and the excellent results likely to follow such a policy. —GEO. D. FULLER.

MINOR NOTICES

Syllabus der Pflanzenfamilien.[7]—The student of taxonomy, as well as all those who have frequent occasion to use an abbreviated synopsis of the vegetable kingdom, will welcome the appearance of this new edition of the well known *Syllabus*. From former editions it differs mainly by the incorporation in the text of numerous carefully selected figures which greatly elucidate the subject. A few additions have been made and certain groups of plants which until recently have been placed doubtfully in the natural system are here given a definite position in the progressive sequence of orders. For example, the Julianiales (*Juliania* and *Orthopterygium*) is ranked as an independent order and placed between the Juglandales and Fagales in accordance with HEMSLEY'S recent treatment. Manifestly, in a work of this scope it would be impossible to take cognizance of all genera known up to the time of publication; but a statement by these eminent authors of the relative position of the remarkable plant described as *Mitrastemon*, representing the monotypic order Mitrastemonales of MAKINO, would have been of interest to the systematist. However, this is but a slight omission when one considers that the purpose of the work is to serve as a convenient guide for the classification of plants in accordance with the most advanced knowledge of the science at the present time. The book contains a vast amount of authoritative information in epitomized form, and deserves, and doubtless will meet with, a wide circulation among American students.—J. M. GREENMAN.

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[7] ENGLER, ADOLPH, and GILG, ERNST, Syllabus der Pflanzenfamilien. pp. xxxii+387. *figs*. *457*. Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger. 1912.